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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, was held in Nairobi, from 7 to 17 August 1995. The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly, annexed to the present note, the report on that session.

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ANNEX

Report of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, on its seventh session

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1	4
II.	ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS	2 - 10	4
	A. Officers of the Committee	2	4
	B. Adoption of the agenda	3	5
	C. Attendance	4 - 8	5
	D. Documentation	9	6
	E. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations	10	6
III.	PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES	11 - 27	6
	A. Recommendations of Working Group I	12 - 18	7
	B. Recommendations of Working Group II	19 - 23	8
	C. Dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee	24 - 27	8
IV.	URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA AND ACTION TAKEN IN OTHER REGIONS	28 - 29	9
V.	STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION	30 - 31	9
VI.	REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS	32 - 33	9
VII.	PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTH SESSION	34	9
VIII.	ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS SEVENTH SESSION	35	9

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

Appendices

I. List of documents before the Committee at its seventh session 10

II. Resolution and decisions adopted by the Committee at its seventh session 14

III. Conclusions by the Chairman on agenda items 3, 4 and 5 20

IV. Provisional agenda for the eighth session of the Committee 24

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening and duration of the session

1. The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, was held in Nairobi from 7 to 17 August 1995. The session was convened in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 48/191 of 21 December 1993 entitled "Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa". At its seventh session, the Committee held eight meetings (1st to 8th).

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Officers of the Committee

2. The Bureau of the Committee, as elected at its sixth session, is constituted as follows:

Chairman: Mr. Bo Kjellén (Sweden)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. René Valéry Mongbe (Benin)
Mr. T. P. Sreenivasan (India)
Mr. José Urrutia (Peru)

Rapporteur: Mr. Nikita F. Glazovsky (Russian Federation)

Working Group I

Chairman: Mr. Mourad Ahmia (Algeria)

Vice-Chairmen:* Mr. Mohammad Reza H. K. Djabbary (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr. Erwin Ortiz-Gandarillas (Bolivia)

Working Group II

Chairman: Mr. Takao Shibata (Japan)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. David Etuket (Uganda)
Mr. Anatoli M. Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan)

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* A third Vice-Chairman is to be elected at the eighth session.

B. Adoption of the agenda

3. At the 1st meeting, on 7 August, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Preparation for the Conference of the Parties.
3. Urgent action for Africa and action taken in other regions.
4. Status of signature and ratification of the Convention.
5. Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds.
6. Adoption of the provisional agenda for the eighth session.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session.

C. Attendance

4. Representatives of the following States attended the session: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

5. The following United Nations offices and organs were represented: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

6. The following specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and Global Environment Facility.

7. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, Arab Maghreb Union, European Commission, Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Organization of African Unity (OAU), Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Sahara and Sahel Observatory and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

8. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: African Forum for Mathematical Ecology (AFME), Association des volontaires pour le développement (AVD), Association for the Promotion of Appropriate, Socially and Environmentally Adapted Technologies, Association pour la protection de la nature (APN), Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Both Ends, Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement (CRID), Climate Action, Africa, Comité de coordination des actions des ONG au Mali, Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF), CONGAC - Confederation des ONG d'environnement et développement de l'Afrique centrale, Consejo Andino de Manejo Ecológico (CAME), Council for Human Ecology-Kenya (CHEK), Development Alternatives Network, Earthaction Network, Earthcare Africa Monitoring Institute, Environment Liaison Centre International, Environmental Monitoring Group, Environnement et développement du Tiers-monde (ENDA-TM), European Environmental Bureau, German Advisory Council on Global Change, Guamina, International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, Natural Heritage Institute, Restoration of Environment Against Distress (READ), Sahel Défis: Développement Environnement Formation Insertion Sociale, School Dropout Services, Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE), Solidarité Canada Sahel, Tanzania Tree Planting Foundation, Turkish Foundation for Combatting Erosion, Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA), Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement, Wilderness Society, World Learning (PVO/NGO/NRMS) and Youth For Action (YFA).

D. Documentation

9. The documents before the Committee at its seventh session are listed in appendix I to the present report.

E. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

10. At the 6th meeting, on 14 August, the Committee, bearing in mind paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and rule 49 of the rules of procedure of the Committee (A/AC.241/3), decided to approve the accreditation of the non-governmental organizations listed in document A/AC.241/9/Add.9 and 10 (see appendix II, decision 7/1).

III. PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

11. The Committee allocated the question of preparation for the Conference of the Parties (agenda item 2) to its two Working Groups.

A. Recommendations of Working Group I

12. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Mourad Ahmia (Algeria), reported on the outcome of the deliberations in that working group and presented five draft decisions recommended by the Working Group for adoption by the Committee.

Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning

13. The Committee had before it a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.1), submitted by Uganda on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning". (For consideration of the draft decision, see appendix II, decision 7/6.)

Identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism

14. The Committee adopted a revised draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.2/Rev.1), submitted by Uganda on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism" (see appendix II, decision 7/2).

Financial rules

15. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.3), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Financial rules" (see appendix II, decision 7/3).

Programme and budget

16. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.4), submitted and orally revised by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Programme and budget" (see appendix II, decision 7/4).

Location of a permanent secretariat

17. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.5), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Location of a permanent secretariat" (see appendix II, decision 7/5).

Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning

18. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.6), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning" (see appendix II, decision 7/6).

B. Recommendations of Working Group II

19. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Chairman of Working Group II, Mr. Takao Shibata (Japan), reported on the outcome of the deliberations in that Working Group and presented three draft decisions recommended by the Working Group for adoption by the Committee.

Draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties

20. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/L.1), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties" (see appendix II, decision 7/7).

Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation

21. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/L.2), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation" (see appendix II, decision 7/8).

22. In connection with the draft decision, the Chairman, at the request of the Chairman of Working Group II on behalf of the Working Group, agreed to explore with the Global Environment Facility the possibilities of its assisting affected developing countries in compiling and communicating information in accordance with the relevant articles of the Convention.

Organization of scientific and technological cooperation

23. The Committee adopted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/L.3), submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Organization of scientific and technological cooperation" (see appendix II, decision 7/9).

C. Dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee

24. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee had before it a draft resolution submitted by Pakistan, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee" (A/AC.241/L.27).

25. After consultations with the Group of 77 and other interested parties, the Chairman made a proposal on the dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee.

26. Following statements by the representatives of Japan, Tunisia, Benin and India, the Committee adopted a draft resolution based on the proposal by the Chairman (see appendix II, resolution 7/1).

27. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Tunisia and Pakistan.

IV. URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA AND ACTION TAKEN IN OTHER REGIONS

28. The Committee held a discussion on the question of urgent action for Africa and action taken in other regions (agenda item 3) at the 2nd to 6th meetings, on 8, 9 and 14 August 1995.

29. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee had before it a conference room paper containing conclusions by the Chairman on the item (A/AC.241/CRP.15), which the Committee agreed to annex to the report (see appendix III).

V. STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION

30. The Committee held a discussion on the question of the status of signature and ratification of the Convention (agenda item 4) at the 1st meeting, on 7 August 1995.

31. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee had before it a conference room paper containing conclusions by the Chairman on the item (A/AC.241/CRP.15), which the Committee agreed to annex to the report (see appendix III).

VI. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

32. The Committee held a discussion on the question of the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds (agenda item 5) at the 6th and 7th meetings, on 14 August 1995.

33. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee had before it a conference room paper containing conclusions by the Chairman on the item (A/AC.241/CRP.15/Add.1), which the Committee agreed to annex to the report (see appendix III).

VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTH SESSION

34. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee approved a draft provisional agenda for its eighth session (see appendix IV).

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS SEVENTH SESSION

35. At the 8th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee adopted its draft report as contained in document A/AC.241/L.28 and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee.

APPENDIX I

List of documents before the Committee at its seventh session

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/AC.241/9/ Add.9 and 10	1	List of non-governmental organizations recommended for accreditation by the Committee
A/AC.241/32	1	Provisional agenda for the seventh session
A/AC.241/33 and Add.1	2	Note by the Secretariat on the identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism
A/AC.241/34	2	Note by the Secretariat on the designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning
A/AC.241/35	2	Note by the Secretariat on the draft financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, its subsidiary bodies and the permanent secretariat
A/AC.241/36	2	Note by the Secretariat on the programme budget
A/AC.241/37	2	Note by the Secretariat on the organization of scientific and technological cooperation
A/AC.241/38	2	Note by the Secretariat on the draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties
A/AC.241/39	2	Note by the Secretariat on the procedures for communication of information and review of implementation
A/AC.241/40	3	Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of urgent action for Africa and action in other regions: compilation of information
A/AC.241/41 and Add.1	5	Note by the Secretariat on the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds
A/AC.241/L.27	2	Draft resolution, submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee"
A/AC.241/L.28	7	Draft report of the Committee on its seventh session
A/AC.241/CRP.15 and Add.1	3, 4, 5	Conference room paper containing conclusions by the Chairman on agenda items 3, 4 and 5

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/AC.241/Misc.3	3	Implementation of urgent action for Africa and action in other regions: compilation of information
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.1	3	Contribution from the Government of Switzerland
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.2	3	Contribution from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.3	3	Contribution from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.4	3	Contribution from the Government of the United States of America
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.5	3	Contribution from the Government of Japan
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.6	3	Contribution from the Government of the Philippines
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.7	3	Contribution from the Government of Germany
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.8	3	Contribution from the Government of Namibia
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.9	3	Contribution from the Government of the Sudan
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.10	3	Contribution from the Sahara and Sahel Observatory
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.11	3	Contribution from the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office/United Nations Development Programme
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.12	3	Contribution from the Government of China
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.13	3	Contribution from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.14	3	Contribution from the Government of Portugal
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.15	3	Contribution from the World Meteorological Organization
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.16	3	Contribution from the Government of Finland
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.17	3	Contribution from the International Fund for Agricultural Development

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.18	3	Contribution from the United Nations Environment Programme
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.19	3	Contribution from the Government of France
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.20	3	Contribution from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
A/AC.241/ Misc.3/Add.21	3	Contribution from the Government of Ethiopia
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/L.1	2	Draft decision, submitted by Uganda on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning"
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/ L.2/Rev.1	2	Revised draft decision, submitted by Uganda on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, entitled "Identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism"
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/L.3	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Financial rules"
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/L.4	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Programme and budget"
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/L.5	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Location of a permanent secretariat"
A/AC.241/ WG.I(VII)/L.6	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group I, entitled "Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning"
A/AC.241/ WG.II(VII)/ L.1	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties"
A/AC.241/ WG.II(VII)/ L.2	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation"
A/AC.241/ WG.II(VII)/ L.3	2	Draft decision, submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II, entitled "Organization of scientific and technological cooperation"

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/AC.241/ WG.II(VII)/ CRP.1	2	Conference room paper containing an informal compilation of the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology, the roster of independent experts and ad hoc panels

APPENDIX II

A. Resolution adopted by the Committee at its seventh session

Resolution 7/1

Dates and venue of the sessions of the Committee

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 in which the Assembly decided to establish the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 49/234 of 23 December 1994 in which the Assembly decided to convene further necessary sessions in 1996 and 1997 of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, the venue and timing of which should be recommended by the Committee,

Recalling further its resolution 6/1 of 18 January 1995, in particular paragraph 7 thereof, in which the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee recommended to the General Assembly that the Committee hold two sessions in 1996 and two sessions in 1997, the venue and timing of which would be decided by the Assembly on recommendation of the Committee at its seventh session,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1995/__ of __ 1995, in which the Council adopted the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1996 and 1997 in the economic, social and related fields,*

Bearing in mind the need to provide sufficient extrabudgetary resources to enable developing countries to participate effectively in the sessions of the Committee,

Expressing its concern at the present level of the Special Voluntary Fund for the participation of developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries,

1. Appeals to Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to make early contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund in order to ensure the effective participation of developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries;

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* At its resumed substantive session of 1995 and based on the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences.

2. Invites the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, in consultation with the Executive Secretary of the interim secretariat, to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the financial situation of the two extrabudgetary funds;

3. Recommends to the General Assembly that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee hold two sessions in 1996, each of up to two weeks' duration, its eighth session in Geneva from 5 to 16 February, and its ninth session in New York from 3 to 13 September;

4. Also recommends that the General Assembly decide to convene a further two sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in 1997, each of up to two weeks' duration, the tenth session to be held in New York from 6 to 17 January and the eleventh session in April, the exact dates and venue of which shall be decided at a later stage;

5. Requests the General Assembly to review the financial situation of the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund in the light of the report to be submitted to the Assembly at its fiftieth session and to take appropriate decisions;

6. Recommends that, upon the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention be convened in the second and third week of June 1997 or, alternatively, the second and third week of August 1997.

B. Decisions adopted by the Committee at its seventh session

Decision 7/1

Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, bearing in mind paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and rule 49 of the rules of procedure of the Committee (A/AC.241/3), decided to approve the accreditation of the following non-governmental organizations:

Association conglaise du froid (ASCOFROID)
Association internationale des femmes francophones
Women in Service Development Organisation and Management (WISDOM)
Communities Forestry and Social Development Organisation
Association française d'amitié et de solidarité avec les peuples d'Afrique (AFASPA)
AT Association: Association for the Promotion of Appropriate, Socially and Environmentally Adapted Technologies

Comité de santé et de développement de Birava
The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone
Mission Sahel
German Advisory Council on Global Change

Decision 7/2

Identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, noting the responses received from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility to the letter sent by the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee regarding their interest and capacity to house the Global Mechanism, and welcoming the positive character of the responses received from the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Development Programme:

(a) Requested the Secretariat to identify and compile from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification particularly in Africa 1/ and its regional implementation annexes, 2/ articles relevant to the functions and modalities of the Global Mechanism;

(b) Also requested the Secretariat to compile inputs from the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and any supplementary submissions from member States to the Secretariat not later than 15 October 1995;

(c) Further requested the Secretariat to prepare a preliminary draft list of criteria for selection of an institution to assist the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;

(d) Invited those organizations that have so far expressed interest in housing the Global Mechanism to continue the process of consultations with their respective governing bodies and submit the outcome of their consultations to the interim secretariat;

(e) Decided to review the issue of the identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism at its eighth session on the basis of an analytical and synoptic report to be prepared by the interim secretariat.

1/ A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

2/ Ibid., annexes I-IV.

Decision 7/3

Financial rules

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, having considered the question of financial rules discussed in document A/AC.241/35 at its seventh session, invited the interim secretariat to submit a revised version of the financial rules at its eighth session, taking into account the views expressed by delegations at its seventh session.

Decision 7/4

Programme and budget

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, having considered the question of programme and budget discussed in document A/AC.241/36 at its seventh session, invited the interim secretariat to submit a revised version of document A/AC.241/36 related to programme and budget at its eighth session, taking into account the views expressed by delegations at its seventh session as well as views communicated by delegations to the interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. 1/

Decision 7/5

Location of a permanent secretariat

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa:

(a) Took note of the interest expressed by some Governments at the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa in hosting the permanent secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; 1/

(b) Invited all Governments interested in hosting the permanent secretariat to transmit in writing to the interim secretariat the details of their offers, taking into account the elements of information with respect to this decision (annex II to document A/AC.241/34, as amended);

(c) Requested the interim secretariat to present a compilation of the offers received at its ninth session.

Decision 7/6

Designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, having considered the question of the designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning at its seventh session:

(a) Decided to transmit to its next session the draft decision submitted by Uganda on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.1);

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its next session a report on the nature of administrative arrangements and on support from the United Nations to the permanent secretariat that could be provided without being fully integrated in the work programme and management structure of any particular programme.

Decision 7/7

Draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa:

(a) Decided to use the draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties prepared by the interim secretariat (document A/AC.241/38) as the basis for future negotiations;

(b) Requested the interim secretariat to prepare a revised text for its eighth session reflecting the comments and suggestions made in Working Group II during its seventh session.

Decision 7/8

Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa:

(a) Invited its members to communicate to the interim secretariat, by 15 October 1995, further views on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation;

(b) Requested the interim secretariat to prepare, for its eighth session, a draft decision of the Conference of the Parties on this subject based on document A/AC.241/39, on comments and suggestions of its members in Working Group II made at the seventh session, and on contributions received in writing.

Decision 7/9

Organization of scientific and technological cooperation

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa:

(a) Decided to use the informal compilation prepared by the interim secretariat (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/CRP.1) on the organization of scientific and technological cooperation for further discussion;

(b) Requested the interim secretariat to prepare, for its eighth session, draft terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology on the basis of comments and suggestions made at its seventh session and of any further views that might be communicated by its members to the interim secretariat, in writing, before 15 October 1995.

APPENDIX III

Conclusions by the Chairman on agenda items 3, 4 and 5

A. Status of signature and ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

1. The Executive Secretary gave a status report on the current situation. He noted that 107 countries had now signed the Convention. Five countries - Mexico, Cape Verde, Egypt, Senegal and the Netherlands - have ratified. A number of statements were made by country representatives and the spokesman for the European Union. A common feature of these declarations was that ratification processes were well under way in a considerable number of countries.

2. It is recalled that the Convention continues to be open for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York until 13 October 1995 (article 33). From the day after that date, the Convention will be open for accession (article 34.1).

3. It is also recalled that the Convention shall enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession (article 36.1). The first session of the Conference of the Parties shall take place not later than one year after the date of entry into force of the Convention (article 22.4).

4. According to the information given by delegations, it seems realistic to expect that the Convention will enter into force not later than the second half of 1996, and that the first session of the Conference of the Parties would therefore be held in 1997.

5. The Chairman underlined the need for early ratification of the Convention and requested all countries to take necessary measures to this end.

B. Urgent action for Africa and action taken in other regions

6. As in the previous session, the discussion was very comprehensive and in many ways encouraging. It demonstrated that all signatories of the Convention are taking active steps to promote interim action. This is important, since countries are specifically committed to implementing resolution 5.1 on urgent action for Africa. The discussion also demonstrated that countries in other regions are also taking concrete action. This underlines the global character of the problem of desertification and drought and the readiness of countries to initiate response measures under the Convention.

7. In this context, the efforts to structure the discussions along regional lines were relatively successful; the method will be further refined at forthcoming sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

8. Statements were made by a great number of government representatives, and of spokesmen for international or regional and subregional organizations as well as of non-governmental organization representatives. Within the framework of urgent action for Africa, specific presentations were made by Mali, Namibia, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union. These presentations were followed by questions and comments that helped to clarify the various aspects of the actions undertaken and to identify the problems encountered.

9. Since the major part of the discussion related to Africa, the following brief summary of salient points refers mainly to that continent, but it applies also largely to the statements made on action in other regions:

(a) Institutional and legal measures: Structures are being created at various levels to support the implementation of the Convention, including the promotion of decentralization and better participation at the local level. Legislation on forestry and pastoralism as well as land tenure is being reviewed. Preparations are under way for the creation of national desertification funds;

(b) Promotion of the consultative process for the elaboration of national action programmes: Consultations have been organized in order to identify major themes for national forums and to establish timetables and modalities for their work. This also includes questions of funding and the active participation of donor countries. The importance of efficient coordination, in particular through the nomination of a chef de file (standard-bearer), was emphasized. Representatives of donor countries and of Northern international organizations presented the actions they were undertaking, including the provision of financial resources. The particular role of research and technological and scientific cooperation was highlighted;

(c) Information and awareness-raising activities: Many examples were given of these efforts, which are essential for the effective implementation of the Convention. They range from publications and articles to the organization of conferences, seminars, symposia and rallies. It was noted with satisfaction that the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (17 June) had been observed in an efficient way;

(d) Action at the regional and the subregional level: It was noted that interim action under the regional implementation annexes was now accelerating and that, in this context, important regional meetings had been or would be held in the northern Mediterranean, Asian and Latin American regions. With regard to Africa, considerable subregional activity is being undertaken by both CILSS, IGADD and the Arab Maghreb Union, as well as in southern Africa with the active participation of SADC;

(e) Participation of non-governmental organizations: Both in national statements and in statements made by non-governmental organization representatives, it was underlined that active participation of non-governmental organizations is an essential prerequisite for success in the implementation of

the urgent action and of the Convention itself. The presence of a large number of non-governmental organizations and the many various activities they organize in the context of the Committee session were welcomed;

(f) Support by the interim secretariat: Many speakers expressed their satisfaction and thanks for the way in which the interim secretariat was facilitating urgent action for Africa and interim action in other regions.

10. The general impression of the discussion was that the Convention had created a positive atmosphere, which was enabling all the many actors involved to take new initiatives that might be of great importance. The several innovative aspects of the Convention have been highlighted. There is, however, no reason for complacency. The problems of the drylands are extremely serious and there is no time to lose in launching action under urgent action for Africa and interim action in other regions. In particular, the importance of creating the right conditions for the bottom-up, participatory approach, namely, through awareness-building and education, was underlined. On the other hand, all possibilities to strengthen the Convention through cooperation with other conventions or, in more general terms, with the Rio follow-up process itself should be explored.

11. Countries and organizations that participated in the discussion were encouraged to supply supplementary information. With regard to the preparation of this agenda item for the eighth session of the Committee, countries are invited to communicate to the Secretariat in advance any information they wish to have circulated at the session. In this way, the Secretariat can make a compilation and facilitate the exchange of experience and review which is foreseen in General Assembly resolution 49/234, paragraph 4 (b).

C. Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds

12. The Committee took note of the note by the Secretariat on the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds (A/AC.241/41 and Add.1), as well as of the oral presentation made by the Executive Secretary. There was general appreciation of the efforts of the Secretariat to present a clear and comprehensive picture of the various issues relating to the financing of the Secretariat and support for the participation of developing countries. The new format established for the note was particularly welcomed since it corresponded to points made by several countries at the sixth session of the Committee. The inclusion of data on regular budget resources was considered helpful.

13. A number of countries, including some developing countries, indicated that they would be making contributions to the voluntary funds over the next few months. In some cases, precise amounts were indicated; in other cases, the countries will be in contact with the Secretariat as soon as possible to indicate the amounts and discuss the modalities of contributions. Developed country representatives underlined their support for the process through contributions to the two funds: they are both considered important, since it is essential that the high quality of Secretariat work be maintained; and necessary that developing countries, in particular least developed countries, be well represented at forthcoming sessions of the Committee.

14. Developing countries expressed satisfaction at the pledges of support for the voluntary funds that had been made, but they felt that it would be highly desirable for the range of contributors to be widened, and for the funds to be brought to a level commensurate with needs. In this context, the Executive Secretary appealed to donor countries to make further efforts, in particular to enable developing countries to participate fully in the continued negotiating process.

15. The Chairman also made a strong plea to all Governments and to concerned international organizations to make early and substantial contributions to the voluntary funds. In particular, he pointed out that the full participation of developing country experts from capitals in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa meetings greatly contributed to the work of the Committee and to the efficiency of action in the field.

16. He stated that he would consult with the Executive Secretary and review the situation with regard to the voluntary funds in October 1995 in order to prepare the report to be submitted to the General Assembly as called for in Assembly resolution 49/234, and possibly take other steps to inform countries of the status of voluntary funds, before the Assembly discussion of issues related to desertification and drought, including the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

17. Suggestions were made with regard to possible new sources of financing; issues related to the contributions of different international organizations were also raised. In this context, the representative of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO)/UNDP made a statement.

18. Many countries underlined the important role of awareness-building measures during the interim period. The Secretariat was commended for its efforts in this respect and encouraged to continue its support for such measures. At the same time, the need to avoid duplication, for example, in the production of information material, was emphasized.

APPENDIX IV

Provisional agenda for the eighth session of the Committee

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

2. Preparation for the Conference of the Parties.

3. Special action:

   (a) Urgent action for Africa;

   (b) Action taken in other regions.

4. Status of signature and ratification of the Convention.

5. Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds.

6. Adoption of the provisional agenda for the ninth session.

7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session.